

A safe and healthy workplace and the well-being of our staff is important to Access Alliance. As the pandemic situation develops, we will update our employees, partners, and clients as appropriate. **This FAQ document** was prepared to respond to Access Alliance staff questions.

**1. What is Access Alliance doing to protect employees?**

- We are taking direction from Ministry of Health, Chief Medical Officer of Health and TPH. We are practicing social distancing, screening all people entering our premises, directing people who are unwell to stay home and designating all non-essential/critical staff as off-site/work from home.

**2. What is social distancing?**

- Social distancing is an infection control strategy to slow the transmission of a disease. The aim is to ensure the health care system is not overwhelmed with acute care demands all at once.
- Social distancing means limiting the number of contacts you have with other people in the course of our days. Access Alliance has opted to pause in-person group programming for this reason.
- The Primary Care Services offered at AA remain vital. Where possible, appointments will be offered over the phone and we are working on developing a strategy for virtual care. There will be clients who need to come to the clinic to see their nurse, doctor or nurse practitioner during this period of social distancing. Safely offering these services are also important in the effort to ease the burden on the acute care health system.
- Active screening and limiting the number of staff on site during this pandemic are strategies AA is in the process of developing to ensure safe service provision during this period of social distancing.

**3. I do not feel like I am getting the answers I need from my Manager or HR – why?**

- These are uncertain and complicated times and we ask for your patience as we receive direction from the Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health, and ensure alignment with AA's current policies and collective agreement. Your health and safety, as well as that of the communities in which we live and work, are the most important things.

**4. Are we planning to close locations?**

- No, we are an essential service. However, we are not providing on-site services at various points of access, including Barrington site.

**5. Can I work from Home?**

- Access Alliance has redeployed staff where appropriate. Staff have been designated as Onsite and Offsite. Examples of redeployment are active screening shifts at the entrances to our agency locations, non-clinical tasks to support the primary care team, or alternative means of doing community work.
- Supporting social distancing is central to AA's planning for alternative programming and redeployment, balanced with the need to offer essential services to our clients who may be in even greater need during this pandemic.

## ALL STAFF COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

### 6. Should I stay at home if I am feeling unwell or have symptoms?

- If you are sick, normal sick protocols are in place for this.
- If you are concerned you may have COVID-19 symptoms, use the self-assessment tool (see bottom of document) to guide your decision whether to seek medical attention. Call your manager to let them know.

### 7. How to code your time on time sheets

More directions on this later.

### 8. If I am sick or quarantined in relation to COVID-19, can I apply for EI sick benefits?

- Yes, Service Canada has set up a dedicated phone line for inquiries regarding EI claims related to the COVID-19 pandemic: 1-833-381-2725. We encourage staff to apply for sick EI for all COVID-19 related absences rather than exhaust your regular sick bank. The waiting period has been waived for these situations. Union members will receive a top up as per the collective agreement for EI sick benefits.
- As of March 18: If you are taking care of a sick elderly family member you can apply to Emergency Care benefit similar to EI

### 9. Will I need to provide a medical note for any period of required quarantine or self-isolation, related to COVID-19?

- No. It is no longer required as directed by public health and legislation.

### 10. Are there any changes to our Attendance Management Program?

- The Attendance Management Program supports employees with periodic absenteeism. All justified absences are acceptable.

### 11. What if I can't get to work because of transit issue outside of my control?

- While schedule changes may apply, city transit as an essential service is not currently impacted by any closures. If you rely on public transit to commute to and from work, time your commute adequately.

### 12. What is the difference between self-isolation and self-monitoring mean?

Public Health Ontario has excellent [fact sheets](#) on how to self-monitor and self-isolate.

### 13. I do not have childcare because of daycare closures

- The federal government has created an emergency caregiver program. Staff should contact them for information on how to apply. You can do this through the CRAMyAccount secure portal. We encourage you to troubleshoot and plan shared care with the other parent (if possible). Working from home while providing childcare for young children is not an option.

### 14. I traveled abroad and now am stuck abroad?

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- You have to use existing credits to cover this absence (vacation, floats). Once exhausted, this will be unpaid leave. However when you return to Canada and have to self-isolate, you can apply to sick EI.

### 15. I just returned from abroad do I have to self –isolate.

- Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health is recommending that Health Care Workers and members of the public self-isolate for 14 upon return from travel abroad.
- Where workers are deemed critical to continued operations, the CMOH advises 14 days of self-monitoring for symptoms, including twice daily temperature checks, and use of appropriate PPE.
- All non-essential travel is strongly discouraged.

### 16. Someone in my household is sick, can I work from home?

- If you are asymptomatic, you can report to work (onsite or off-site). If your household member has tested positive for Covid-19, and you remain asymptomatic, you can report to work (off-site) however, you will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

### 17. I am stressed and overwhelmed, concerned for my loved ones and really don’t want to come to work

- Please remember that Access Alliance is taking all measures to ensure staff safety. We are screening everybody who enters the premises. You are actually safer at work than out in the community – that is why it is so important to practice social distancing.
- Please reach out and connect – with co-workers who surely experiencing the same thing, as well as friends and other supports.
- Make sure you are getting your news and information from reputable sources. Your manager is a resource to you if you need to express concerns. If needed, we encourage you use of the resources available through our Employee and Family Assistance Program.
- Use your EAP services – it is a confidential service and you can call the following number: 1877-207-8833
- If you are part of delivering essential and critical health care services, we need you at work.

Use the hyperlink:[LifeWorks](#) by Morneau Shepell | The Total Well-being Platform

View: **25 Minute Webinar – Emotional Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**<https://vimeopro.com/user65099910/emotional-well-being-covid-19>**

If you are working from home, be sure to check in regularly with your manager and keep an eye out for communications from Access Alliance to stay up to date. You should also be mindful of maintaining your well-being. The following resources might help with this:

- **[Making the Transition to Working from Home](#)**
- **[Setting Work-Life Boundaries When You Work from Home](#)**

**Maintaining your mental well-being**

## ALL STAFF COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Worries about COVID-19 can feel overwhelming, and some people may experience stress and anxiety. The following articles address managing stress in such circumstances:

- **Five Ways to Take Your Mind Off the News**
- **How the Assistance Program Can Help in a Crisis**
- **When You or Your Children Are Upset by News Reports**

You can also help yourself and those around you stay positive during stressful times by building your resilience and focusing on positive thinking.

- **Coping With Change** (article series)
- **Practicing Happy Habits to Boost Your Psychological Well-being**
- **Practicing Positivity** (article series)
- **Resilience During a Disease Outbreak, Epidemic, or Pandemic** (Podcast)

References and information is from:

World Health Organization, Public Health Agency of Canada

Public Health Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Health

Government of Canada – Travel Advice and Advisories

Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000

Use following links for learning and assessment:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-health-advice/covid-19-assessment-centres/>

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

Click on [fact sheets](#) on how to self-monitor guidelines.

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en>

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**Can I work from home if I do not have childcare?**

Access Alliance has made the decision that parents with children in grade 2 and lower, who are not able to secure childcare, do not have the capacity to work Offsite /remotely.

Children that age, no matter their temperament, need the appropriate level of care and stimulation. Until they find a solution to their caregiving needs, they will not be able to work remotely and should apply to EI and CERB.

## **ALL STAFF COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**

Additional information on Emergency childcare: To facilitate the ongoing work of essential service staff, emergency childcare programs have been established.

Toronto has 4 centres located in each quadrant of the city. For information on eligible service, workers and applications go to:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-social-support/covid-19-child-care-for-essential-workers/>

For emergency workers in Peel, details and registration can be found here:

<https://www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/childcare/>

In York Region, details and applications are at:

<https://www.missioninc.com/olaf/york/en-ca/welcome>